pulses at reasonable prices to the consumers before the arrival of kharif 2006 crop of pulses in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) A point to point comparison of the monthly Wholesale Price Indices (WPI) of important Pulses during January—March, 2005 & January—March, 2006 is shown below:—

Wholesale Price Index for Pulses (Base: 1993-94=100)

Pulses	Jan. 05	Jan. 06	% Increase	Feb. 05	Feb. 06	% Increase	March 05	Mar 06 (Prov.)	% Increase
Gram	136.8	172.1	25.8	135.9	169.1	24.4	135.8	166.1	22.3
Arhar	171.3	171.1	-0.1	165.8	164.5	-0.8	161.1	168.8	4.8
Moong	191.6	230.3	20.2	187.4	252.3	34.6	188.9	246.3	30.4
Masur	237.0	242.6	2.4	230.4	239.4	3.9	227.4	238.4	4.8
Urad	219.2	313.7	43.1	215.3	340.9	58.3	210.5	317.9	51.0
TOTAL Pulses	173.9	209.5	20.5	170.6	215.2	26.1	168.8	210.2	24.5

Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry

(c) Efforts are made to keep the prices of pulses within reasonable level through increase in domestic production and imports. A Centrally Sponsored Integrated Scheme of Pulses, Oilseeds, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) is under implementation to increase productivity and production of pulses. The domestic production is estimated to have increase from 131.3 lakh tones in 2004-05 to 139.2 lakh tones during 2005-06. Since the domestic production of pulses remains inadequate as compared to the demand; imports are also resorted to keep the prices under check.

Economic viability of agriculture

3668. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of NSSO survey, stating that Agriculture, since the beginning of the Ninth-Five-Year Plan has been rendered economically unviable;

(b) if so, the extent to which the per acre yield, crop-wise, has dwindled and land holdings squeezed since the beginning of the Ninth Plan period, as per the survey;

(c) whether Government propose to evolve a New Agriculture Policy; and

(d) if so, the details and the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) has not conducted any specific survey on economic viability of agriculture. However, as per their 59th round, conducted for the reference period of July, 2002 to June, 2003, at the all India level, 60% of farmer households reported that they like farming as a profession while the remaining 40% were of the opinion that, given a choice, they would take up some other career. Forty percent of the farmers households who did not like farming comprised of 27% who did not find it profitable, 8% who taught it was too risky and 5% farmers disliked farming because of its lack of social status and other reasons.

(b) There is no survey of NSSO available with respect to crop-wise per hectare yield. However as per official estimates there has been a general upward trend in the per hectare yield of most of the important agriculture crops since the Ninth-Five-Year Plan.

According to the NSSO survey report (59th round), the percentage of household operational holdings, of size class 1.0 hectares or less has increased from 70.1% in 1991-92 to 79% in 2002-03. In case of other size classes, the percentage share has decreased over the same period.

(c) and (d) The Government announced the National Agricultural Policy in July, 2000 with the broad objectives of an accelerated, balanced and technologically, environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural; growth based on efficient use of resources. It also aims at a growth that is demand driven and caters to domestic markets and maximizes benefits from exports of agricultural products in the face of the challenges arising from economic liberalization and globalization.

Policy measures include, among others, (i) enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; (ii) ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs; (iii) promoting farmer

friendly, demand driven agriculture extension system; (iv) accelerating diversification to high vlalue crops including horticulture activities; (v) strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; (vi) optimizing the efficient utilization of available water resources through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; (vii) reforming agricultural markets, and widespread use of post harvest technology; and (viii) putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers.

Proposal of buffalo-breeding programme submitted by Punjab

3669. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Punjab has submitted a Rs. 4.00 crores project proposal for buffalo-breeding and improving the buffalo breed in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the Central Government's aid sought therefor; and

(c) what is Government's reaction and response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government of Punjab submitted the project proposal in 2000-01 under National Project for Cattle and Buffalo Breeding. The project has been approved with the total cost of Rs. 2148 lakh; out of which an amount of Rs. 1433.10 lakh has been released so far to the Punjab Livestock Development Board for the implementation of project.

Transferring of funds by NDDB

†3670 SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
DR. PRABHA THAKUR:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) had transferred

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.